



Foreign Agricultural Service

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## Japan

### Agricultural Situation

#### This Week in Japan

2001

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**Report Highlights:** A summary of events and developments in the United States' largest export market for agricultural, forestry, and fishery products. This week's highlights include: Japan's Pork Safeguard Triggered; Japan Studying Food Stockpiling for WTO Talks; China Now Leading Furniture Exporter to Japan; Weak Yen Limits Asparagus Imports.

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Tokyo ATO [JA2], JA



## *This Week in Japan*

*An Update of Major News and Events from the Largest U.S. Agricultural Export Market*

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**Japan's Pork Safeguard Triggered:** Effective August 1, Japan will increase tariffs on pork imports until March 31, 2002. The emergency measure is invoked automatically when imports over the preceding three months are 19% above the average volume for the same quarter in the previous three year period. As a result, the standard import price for pork cuts and carcasses increased about 25%. Japan was granted the right to impose the emergency measures during the Uruguay Round of agriculture negotiations. Trade sources report the SG measure will eventually lead to increased prices for imported pork and distort trade flows during the eight month period. See FAS/Japan's report, JA1075, for details. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

**Japan Studying Food Stockpiling for WTO Talks:** Japan's Food Agency has initiated the study of a several-nation food stockpiling plan. This plan is targeted for inclusion in Japan's proposal for WTO agricultural negotiations. The group's agenda includes looking at improving food security through food aid, including the need for worldwide stockpiling of rice. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

**China Now Leading Furniture Exporter to Japan:** Japanese wood furniture imports in 2000 grew 19.8% from the previous year, the first increase after three years of stagnation. China emerged as the top supplier for the first time ahead of Taiwan, with imported U.S. wood furniture (valued at \$60 million) ranked 8th. However, increases in Japan's imports of Chinese furniture are also good news for U.S. hardwood exports which are exported to China for processing into furniture and re-exported to Japan. See FAS/Japan's report, JA1071, for details. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

**Weak Yen Limits Asparagus Imports:** Japanese imports of U.S. asparagus declined approximately 35 percent in 2001 from the previous year. Mexican asparagus imports also fell. The weakened Japanese yen is the major cause for the decline, according to traders. Importers generally could not pass on higher prices of imported asparagus to Japan's price-conscious consumers, reflecting the continued sluggish economy. See FAS/Japan's report, JA1073, for details. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

**Upcoming Events:** August 27 Single-Buyer Showcase with Prince Hotels Chain in Tokyo; August 30 Toho Food Service Fair 2001 in Kobe (Western Japan); September 5 Chain Food Service Fair 2001 in Fukuoka (Western Japan); September 18-19 CGC Food Products Annual Exhibition in Yokohama (near Tokyo); September 26 USMEF Sponsored Luncheon with North Carolina Governor Easley; September 26-28 Health Ingredients Japan in Tokyo.